2011 Rhode Island Cyber Foundations Competition: FAQs

High school students throughout Rhode Island are invited to sign up for the Rhode Island Cyber Foundations Competition, which tests their computer networking skills and introduces them to the growing field of information technology. This competition will be run by the Center for Internet Security, a national non-for-profit organization responsible for identifying and developing potential talent for the cyber security workforce of the future. Congressman Jim Langevin, New England Institute of Technology, Rhode Island Department of Education, RI Science & Technology Advisory Council, and Tech Collective are pleased to join as partners in this initiative.

What is the Cyber Foundations Competition?
This program consists of three progressively challenging competitions where students can demonstrate their mastery of the foundations of effective cyber security: computer internals and system administration, safe web-site development, and Java and C programming. These skills are critical to a young person looking for a new information technology job in, or outside of, the cyber security field. Top scoring students in each of the three competitions will be recognized, as will schools with the top scoring teams.

How do students register?
Student registration will take place through February 18, 2011, and participating schools will receive an access code that allows all students at the school to compete for free. While the program is designed to run without experts needed to guide each student, a teacher-leader is encouraged. To register, the students or school must contact Erin Flynn, the Rhode Island coordinator, at 1-800-736-7744 x3462 or eflynn@neit.edu.

Which students should participate?
Although State All Stars will be named, this program is not designed to find just a few standouts. Rather, it is designed to find hundreds of talented young people around Rhode Island and launch them into college or military programs where they can continue to develop their knowledge and skills and become key players in the cyber security of the United States. Students that have an interest in computer courses or games are likely participants, but so are students that like to take objects apart to see how they work. Students that would like to explore a new vocation are also encouraged to participate.

What will students need to participate?
Participating students will need YouTube access for competition activities but teachers may use downloaded versions of the videos. The activities can be performed either at school or at home with computer and internet access. Learning the material will not require any changes to the high school curricula since the competition's teaching sites are being set up to provide both written and video lessons for students who need to brush up or learn the key content to prepare for the competitions. Pre-competition preparation will be part of the program, as will follow-up activities to keep students engaged in the possibility of selecting cyber security as a career.

What is the Timeline?
Dates for the 2011 Cyber Foundations competition are:

• February 18, 2011: Deadline for high schools to register to enable their students to compete

• February 21 to March 3: Online tutorial for Module 1 (Networking) open

• March 4: Competition for Module 1

• March 7 to March 17: Tutorial for Module 2 (Operating Systems) open

• March 18: Competition for Module 2

• March 21 to April 7: Tutorial for Module 3 (System Administration) open

• April 8: Competition for Module 3

How much time will these competitions take?
Each of the three competitions is expected to take a total of 2-6 hours of preparation time and about 1 hour for the competitive activity.

I'm not a student, but still want to get involved.
While the program is designed to run without experts needed to guide each student, the business, military, education and nonprofit sectors are encouraged to get involved. They may volunteer as mentors, speak at workshops or through webinars and web chats, or help with the final event. These partnerships will help connect high school students to local higher education institutions and businesses and provide them with a year-round connection to the cyber security or technical industries to promote career interest in a necessary and growing field.

What is the U.S. Cyber Challenge?
Cyber Foundations is the entry-level competition in a series of increasingly challenge contests sponsored by the U.S. Cyber Challenge (USCC). USCC was chartered to identify and nurture talented Americans who can become the cyber leaders, cyber guardians and cyber warriors for United States companies, government agencies, and military services. USCC is a division of the Center for Internet Security, a national not-for-profit organization responsible for development and distribution of benchmarks that establish standards for the secure configuration of information technology systems; provision of cyber security for state, local, tribal and territorial governments; and the identification and development of potential talent for the cyber security workforce of the future. For more information on U.S. Cyber Challenge or the Cyber Foundations Competition, please contact Renée N. McLaughlin, Executive Director, renee.mclaughlin@cisecurity.org, (518) 526-3947.

For more information on this program, you can visit:

Congressman Langevin's website- http://langevin.house.gov/
Cyber Foundations 2011- https://www.sans.org/cyber-foundations/
U.S. Cyber Challenge- http://www.uscyberchallenge.org/